

Rattlesnake Creek Partnership Meeting

April 13, 2004

Attendees: Darrell Wood, Vernon Hirt, David Zook, Bruce Falk, Sharon Falk, Kent Lamb, Dan Zehr, Richard Wenstrom, Scott Carlson, Tina Alder, Dave Hilley, Dennis Dutton, Kevin Schultz, and Robert Lewis

The group discussed updating Partnership mailing list. Entities will now include State Conservation Commission, Kansas Water Office, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources, Water PACK, and Big Bend Groundwater Management District. Each entity will provide an updated list for primary contacts.

Scott Carlson provided an overview of the Water Issues Strategic Team (WIST) process and how the issues are addressed through the Natural Resources Sub-Cabinet, Kansas Water Authority and Basin Advisory Committees.

Tina Alder led the review of the Rattlesnake Creek Water Issues Strategic Plan (WISP). The Partnership provided information that will be updated in the WISP and tagged the Water Rights Purchase Program as the number one priority to be funded for the subbasin.

Water Banking:

Adjust the acre feet goal in plan with new numbers that will better reflect water savings. The Charter will move towards implementation after the rules and regulations are in place. Goal is to have Charter in place by December 31, 2004 so water users can participate in 2005.

Compliance and enforcement issue:

GMD No. 5 will try to field visit 800 to 1000 meters annually in the District. GMD No. 5 Board has approved \$50,000 seed money to start up the Water Banking Charter.

Discussion on how DWR/SCC is conducting the cost-share water conservation. It was suggested for the Partnership to consider different years for base period. Need to provide more education to consultants on soil moisture blocks and the landowners should take more initiative of soil moisture management. K-State needs to provide an adequate research station in South Central Kansas. There are stations located in other parts of the state that provided excellent research projects for that area and none exists in this part of Kansas. Flex Accounts need to review base period and adjust to a 10 year average. Need to provide more education on the Rattlesnake Creek programs. End Gun and CREP discussion: Irrigators would be more willing to remove end guns, take reduction in water right if they could get a guarantee to be exempt from future regulation.

Water Right Transfer Program:

There have been no takers, but there have been two inquiries. Need to sell the program.

Augmentation:

The District was seeking 10 year leases. The area to obtain land to drill new wells was too costly as they needed to move upstream in order to get fresh water to augment stream. KDHE would not allow augmentation with saltwater. Landowners were requesting approximately \$0.35/gal or \$114/AF to drill new well on pasture to be used for augmentation.

Low Head Dams:

The project was originally recommended by Burns and McDonald to capture runoff for recharge. The stream channel is now over grown with vegetation indicating not enough runoff over the last three years. They are also fearful that the project could lead to a similar situation as in the Pawnee Buckner basin where the dams are now silted in and vegetated.

Mobile Irrigation Lab:

The group feels that it is not advertised enough when they plan to be in the area demonstrating. Scott reviewed some of the changes the WIST group is seeking for the program: need measurable goals, work with irrigators one-on-one, train on KanSched, provide more information on state and federal programs and the economic pros and cons of end guns. The Partnership agreed and feels that more publicity would get more farmers to attend. Another suggestion was to require SCC cost-share participants to invite MIL to evaluate irrigation system or provide a monetary incentive to invite MIL to field.

The Partnership plans to set up a meeting with Senator Brownback to provide a tour of the Rattlesnake Creek Subbasin in an effort to reacquaint the Senator with the water issues in South-Central Kansas.

The Partnership plans to develop and Public Relations Plan that is agricultural related, provides visual aides to hand out to irrigators on RSC programs to reacquaint them on the management plan. Richard Wenstrom is willing to design a tool that will show all the programs and if Sharon could seek out a PR firm. The want to focus on the first four years and where do we go from here through video, commercials and brochures. This could be funded through Water PACK and Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5.

Criteria for four-year data review:

Focus on streamflow and the interaction between the stream and aquifer system. Need the moving average on streamflow. Sharon will update the moving average of water use and will be requesting 2002 and 2003 water use. The Partnership plans to meet again prior to the Lower Arkansas BAC meeting and the Management Plan four year review in August.

Sharon provided the group with two reports, one on the 2003 data on the transect wells and the other on the Mineral Intrusion Area.

Partnership plans to meet again in mid to late July depending on the date for Lower Ark BAC meeting. The goal is to meet and review RSC WISP prior to the BAC meeting and the four year Partnership review.

Tina Alder
Subbasin Water Resource Management Program
April 16, 2004